

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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INFO CINCPAC

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET VIEW OF EVENTS IN CHINA

REF: MOSCOW 1938

1. SUMMARY: SOVIET CHINA SPECIALISTS IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ARE PONDERING CURRENT SITUATION IN CHINA, BUT APPEAR UNSURE WHERE IT WILL LEAD. PRESS LINE EMPHASIZES POWER STRUGGLE AND POSSIBILITY OF NEW ROUND OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION, WHILE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION SOVIETS MORE HESITANT TO DRAW THIS CONCLUSION. COMMENTS OF PUBLIC LECTURER INDICATE NO CHANGE IN SOVIET POLICY, BUT INTEREST IN BORDER AND MILITARY QUESTIONS REMAINS HIGH. END SUMMARY.

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2. PRAVDA FEB 9 PUBLISHED TASS WRAP-UP OF CHINA INTERNAL SITUATION DATED LINED SINGAPORE, DRAWING EXTENSIVELY ON FOREIGN PRESS ANALYSIS. IT REFERRED TO RECENT PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL LINKING MAO WITH ANTI-CONFUCIUS CAMPAIGN AND SAID FOREIGN OBSERVERS HAD CONCLUDED THAT MAO HAS DECREED SECOND ROUND OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION. IT CITED OPINION THAT MASS CRITICISM CAMPAIGN BEARS STRONG RESEMBLANCE TO FIRST CULTURAL REVOLUTION. EARLIER IN WEEK, RED STAR DEVOTED ANALYTICAL ARTICLE TO SHIFTS IN MILITARY COMMANDS, CONCLUDING THAT MAO FELT IT NECESSARY TO BREAK LOCAL POWER OF PLA BRASS WHO DOMINATED PARTY AND REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES. ARTICLE LINKED THIS STEP WITH LACK OF UNITY IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP HIERARCHY, WHICH HAD LED TO INSTABILITY AND POWER STRUGGLE.

3. SIMILAR EMPHASIS ON DARK SIDE OF CHINESE INTERNAL SITUATION EMERGED IN FEB 10 PUBLIC LECTURE. SPEAKER ALLUDED TO NEW ROUND OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND DREW ON RED STAR ARTICLE MENTIONED ABOVE. ASKED ABOUT TENG HSIAO-PING, SPEAKER SAID HE HAD REGAINED HIS FORMER POSITION AND CHARACTERIZED HIM AS AN ENEMY OF THE SOVIET UNION.

4. LECTURER GAVE MUCH ATTENTION TO MILITARY AND FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF PRC, NOTING CONTINUED BOMB SHELTER CONSTRUCTION AND REPEATING PRESS ALLEGATIONS OF FOREIGN MILITARY SALES TO CHINA AS REPORTED REFTEL. HE PORTRAYED PEKING IN AGGRESSIVE LIGHT IN CONNECTION WITH SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS, SUGGESTING THAT JAPANESE-CONTROLLED SENKAKUS MIGHT ALSO BE ON THE AGENDA. IN REFERRING TO BORDER TALKS, HE MENTIONED DEPFONMIN ILICHEV BY NAME BUT DID NOT INDICATE WHEN HE MIGHT RETURN TO PEKING. HE DESCRIBED THE TALKS AS UNSUCCESSFUL, BUT PREFERABLE TO GUNFIRE, AND HE REITERATED SOVIET DESIRE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS. HE SAID IT WAS "NO SECRET" THAT SOVIET TROOPS WERE STATIONED IN MONGOLIA. RECENT EXPULSION OF SOVIET DIPLOMATS WAS PASSED OFF AS "PROVOCATION," ONE OF SEVERAL IN RECENT PAST.

5. PRIVATE COMMENTS OF SOVIET SINOLOGISTS TEND TO TAKE A MORE CAUTIOUS VIEW OF INTERNAL SCENE. MFA CHINA DESK COUNSELOR ROGACHEV TOLD EMBOFF AT FEB 8 RECEPTION THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE NOT YET PREPARED TO SAY WHETHER FULL-FLEDGED CULTURAL REVOLUTION WOULD ACTUALLY ERUPT AND WHETHER IT WOULD AFFECT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOREIGN POLICY. FAR EAST INSTITUTE SPECIALISTS TOLD A U.S. NEWSMAN LAST WEEK THAT THEY DOUBTED THAT A NEW CULTURAL REVOLUTION WAS IN THE OFFING. THEY WERE STRUCK, HOWEVER, BY A CERTAIN PARALLELISM BETWEEN PARACELS EPISODE AND 1969 DAMANSKY CLASH, IN THAT BOTH EVENTS CAME AT TIME OF INTERNAL STRESSES IN LEADERSHIP. THEY DID NOT TRY TO PUSH THIS ANALOGY TOO FAR, HOWEVER.

6. ASKED ABOUT SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS IN WAKE OF EXPULSION,
ROGACHEV SAID RELATIONS WERE NOT NORMAL- BUT CONCEDED THAT
THINGS WERE MORE OR LESS BACK TO ROUTINE STATE OF ABNORMALCY.
HE WAS SEEN (BUT UNFORTUNATELY NOT OVERHEARD) SPEAKING CORDIALLY
WITH PRC EMBASSY COUNSELOR AT SAME RECEPTION.
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